

the bill forward as a stand-alone bill. As we go into Veterans Day, let's honor those who served by the actions they see us take.

ENSURING PROMISES MADE TO VETERANS

(Mr. SIRES asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. SIRES. Madam Speaker, as America prepares to honor our veterans and those who continue to wear the uniform this weekend, the Democratic Congress is proud of our record over the last 10 months that has provided real support for our troops and our veterans.

Today, we will take a vote on a final veterans bill that increases funding for veterans health care by \$6.7 billion, making it the single largest increase in veterans funding in the 77-year history of the Veterans Administration. This bill invests \$3.8 billion more than the President requested.

The final conference report also includes \$500 million above the President's request for much-needed maintenance in VA health care facilities, and \$600 million more than the President's request for mental health, PTSD and traumatic brain injury. This investment is critically important at a time when one-third of the veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan face mental health challenges.

Madam Speaker, today let us ensure that no veteran is left behind by supporting this bill that fulfills our promises to our Nation's veterans.

FUNDING OUR VETERANS

(Mrs. DRAKE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. DRAKE. Madam Speaker, this is day 37. That is 37 days so far that our veterans have not had the use of increased funding for their benefits and health care. That is \$18.5 million a day not able to be used. In June this House passed this appropriation bill with a \$6 billion increase in a bipartisan manner. On September 6, the Senate completed their bill.

This work is done; yet the bill has not been sent to the President who has agreed to sign it. And why? Because the Democratic leadership has decided to use funding for our veterans as a smoke screen in an effort to pass billions in unrelated domestic spending.

Our veterans are not pawns in a political game. They are heroes. These funding issues must be considered separately and on their own merits. America expects us to get the job done. America expects us to provide the best care to our veterans. Our veterans deserve no less.

Please join me in calling upon the Democratic leadership to put our veterans first and send a clean veterans appropriation bill to the President.

DEMOCRATS IMPROVE VETERANS BENEFITS

(Mrs. CAPPS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. CAPPS. Madam Speaker, as we approach the Veterans Day holiday, I want to express my support for all men and women who have ever served our country. I congratulate the new Democratic Congress for making remarkable improvements to veterans benefits.

During this past year, we have already appropriated the largest increase in veterans health spending ever. We have also taken steps to increase awareness about posttraumatic stress disorder and other mental health needs among veterans.

In addition, we seek to improve our ability to prevent, to diagnose and treat these conditions. I especially would like to note a new awareness about the needs of our women veterans, and commend my colleagues in the Women's Caucus for making the needs of women veterans a priority of ours during this Congress.

As we commemorate Veterans Day this weekend, let us all make a commitment to continuing and renewing our efforts to improve benefits for all veterans.

DEMOCRATS USE MILCON-VA BILL AS POLITICAL TOOL

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, it has been 8 weeks since the Senate passed the Military Construction-Veterans Affairs appropriations bill and joined the House in demonstrating overwhelming and bipartisan support for this legislation. Yet, for two full months, the Democrat leadership has refused to send this important piece of legislation to the floor. They refuse to give our veterans the funding they deserve.

This week the majority will bring the VA bill to the floor attached to the Labor, Health and Human Services and Education appropriations bill. Rather than send these bills to the President on a stand-alone basis, something the Democratic leadership promised they would do, they are using this VA bill as a political tool to push through other legislation.

As a veteran and military parent, I know it is time that our colleagues on the other side of the aisle stop using the military and our veterans as a political tool to help advance their other spending priorities.

In conclusion, God bless our troops and we will never forget September the 11th.

DEMOCRATS TAKE AMERICA IN NEW DIRECTION

(Mr. WELCH of Vermont asked and was given permission to address the

House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WELCH of Vermont. Madam Speaker, 1 year ago the American people went to the voting booths and voted for a new direction. This decision was not only asking for a new Congress, but asking Congress to head in a new direction. One area: Make America safer.

The last Congress ignored the recommendations of the 9/11 Commission. This Congress is implementing the recommendations of the 9/11 Commission. Our ports and skies are safer. Our first responders have better access to emergency communication. We are also recognizing very straightforward and directly that the cost of the war must include the cost of caring for the warrior, and that is why we have passed the largest increase in the veterans health care budget in the history of the Veterans Administration.

And finally, with cop-on-the-beat oversight, we have uncovered the scandal of tens of billions of dollars of waste, fraud and abuse by companies like Blackwater and Halliburton that have benefited enormously from our appropriations.

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QUIT PLAYING POLITICS WITH OUR VETERANS

(Mr. GINGREY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GINGREY. Madam Speaker, as all Members rise to salute our veterans just 5 days from now, I'm appalled that the Democratic majority is holding these veterans hostage by combining a bill that we passed in this House 5 months ago to increase funding for our veterans, as they pointed out in regard particularly to health care, \$6 billion, and the President is ready to sign that bill. But, no, the Democratic majority wants to hold that bill and our veterans hostage so they can pass a bloated-up, pork-laden, Health and Human Services-Labor bill that increases spending over the President's request by \$9 billion.

I think this is a deplorable thing, and I have called for the end of it in House Resolution 786, which would change the rules of the House so that no House could ever combine our MilCon-Veterans Administration budget again with any other appropriations bill. It would have to pass as a stand-alone bill.

Let's quit playing politics with our veterans.

DEMOCRATS HAVE PRIORITIZED THE NEEDS OF OUR VETERANS SINCE DAY ONE

(Mr. PERLMUTTER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Madam Speaker, this weekend and next Monday we will

honor those who have served this Nation on the front line of freedom and democracy.

This Veterans Day, the Democratic-led Congress is working to honor our troops, military families, and veterans with quality-health care.

Today, the House will give final approval to a veterans funding bill that provides the largest increase for veterans in the 77-year history of the VA, and I hear our friends on the other side of the aisle complaining that that's 8 weeks overdue. Well, they had 12 years to do this and they chose not to.

Over the last decade, while the number of veterans has doubled, our Nation's investment in their health care needs has simply not been enough. Unlike the President, this new Democratic Congress vowed to fulfill our promise to our veterans; and, today, we will pass a final veterans funding bill that has been endorsed by all major veterans groups.

This new Democratic Congress has also made major strides in addressing the military health care crisis and the inadequacies of the disability system brought to light by the Walter Reed scandal.

Madam Speaker, as Veterans Day approaches, our Nation's veterans and military families should know that the promises that have been made to them will be fulfilled.

WE SHOULDN'T PLAY THESE POLITICAL GAMES

(Mr. BOEHNER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BOEHNER. Madam Speaker, next Monday is Veterans Day, and I think all of us in America owe those who have fought for our country, given their lives, given their service to our country, we all owe them a great deal of gratitude.

But how is this Congress today, this House, going to give and show our veterans our gratitude? We're going to pass a military quality of life veterans bill, and we're going to attach a pork-laden, overstuffed Labor-Health and Human Services bill on the backs of this bill.

The Senate's not going to take this bill up in this form. They're going to split the two bills. The President's made clear he's not going to sign this bill combining these two appropriations bills. This is one of the most cynical and most political things I've seen in the 17 years that I've been here in Congress.

To know that the President is not going to sign this bill, to know that the Senate is not going to allow this two-bill pile-up to be considered in the Senate, and yet we're going to force the Members of the House today in a position where they shouldn't be.

We shouldn't play these political games on the backs of our veterans and our soldiers. I think that we should split this bill and do it the right way

and show our veterans on Veterans Day that we really do appreciate their sacrifice and their service.

WATERBOARDING IS A CRIME

(Mr. McDERMOTT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. McDERMOTT. Madam Speaker, it's not as hard as the President would like us to believe. Someone reminded me over the weekend of something. Here's what he said.

When the Japanese Army subjected American prisoners of war to waterboarding, it was a crime, and those responsible were severely punished. After World War II, several Japanese soldiers were convicted for waterboarding American and Allied prisoners of war.

At the trial of his captors, Lieutenant Chase Nielson, one of the 1942 Army Air Force officers who flew the Doolittle raid over Tokyo, was captured by the Japanese, said, "I was given several types of torture. I was given what they call the water cure."

He was asked what it felt like when the Japanese soldiers poured the water. "Well, I felt more or less like I was drowning," he replied.

And yet we have an administration complete with Attorneys General and designees who aren't sure if waterboarding is a crime. They can check the record of war tribunals after World War II, because the rest of the world is sure. It was a crime then, and it is a crime today.

Over the weekend I saw "Rendition." It ought to be required viewing for this body.

MILCON-VA APPROPRIATIONS BILL NEEDS TO STAND ALONE

(Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, our veterans and our troops have protected us from enemies, foreign and domestic, in the past decades and currently today.

When has it become a part of our congressional activity to not fully protect their interests? Our VA appropriations bill passed the House over 140 days ago with strong bipartisan support. However, the House majority party never appointed conferees for the bill, where the Senate immediately appointed them.

The military and veterans appropriations bill is now back on the floor with an additional bill attached. Our servicemembers, veterans and our troops, deserve the best that Congress can deliver to them. The MilCon-VA appropriations bill should not be an accessory for massive labor spending.

Has politics blocked our activities in Washington where we cannot pass a military funding bill for our soldiers?

I stand here today with so many others who join me in saying, our MilCon-

VA appropriations bill needs to stand alone, unattached to another bill.

ON SCHIP GOP DOES NOT SHARE DEMOCRATS' LEGISLATIVE GOALS

(Ms. RICHARDSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. RICHARDSON. Madam Speaker, House Democrats and some of our Republican friends continue to fight for a much-needed health care system that we need for our children. Unfortunately, though, the President and too many Republicans in this body still refuse to support a plan that has already received tremendous bipartisan support in the Senate and from the public.

Last month, after meeting with Republican Members and our Democratic leadership, once again we brought forward a bill that would cover 10 million children, 10 million American children who live in this country who deserve to be covered.

But Republicans, my colleagues, have avoided taking this vote. We need to make sure that our children are covered. Instead, they proposed a program that would provide health care for 1.7 million fewer children in America.

Madam Speaker, 81 percent of Americans support a bipartisan effort to provide health care for 10 million children. I hope our Republican colleagues will join us.

SLIDING GREASY PORK THROUGH WASHINGTON IS THE WRONG THING FOR THE DEMOCRATS TO BE DOING

(Mr. AKIN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. AKIN. Madam Speaker, it's been 144 days since the House passed the Veterans Affairs appropriations bill. This is a bill which does research on prosthetic kinds of devices. It helps to rebuild veterans facilities. It helps to treat things like traumatic stress disorder. That's the purpose for the money that has been waiting now since we passed it 144 days ago.

Unfortunately, that bill has been held up in order to connect it with other legislation laden with pork on the HHS bill.

Now, it's been many years since I was a combat engineer in the Army, but my son is freshly back from Fallujah, and to hold our veterans hostage in order to try to slide greasy pork through Washington is the wrong thing for the Democrats to be doing.

They need to allow the bill to stand on its own base, let the people take a vote, and respect the veterans that we want to respect.